

Psychology 459: CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY

8:30 – 9:50 am, Mondays and Wednesdays

Class meets in 245 Straub Hall

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Office Hours: Mondays 1-2:30 pm, Wednesdays 10-10:30 am,

Course TA: Brenna McNeil, office Straub #003, bmcneil@uoregon.edu, office hours 10 am-12 noon Mondays

Text: Heine, Steven J. (2016). *Cultural psychology* (3rd ed.). New York: Norton (*plus a few other readings made available via canvas*)

Course Objectives: What's the Purpose of This Course?

Welcome to cultural psychology! This course explores that way that groups of humans form and maintain shared, transmittable bodies of the norms, beliefs, values, practices, and the like, and how such 'cultural models' affect individual thought, feeling, and behavior. It conveys a high-validity knowledge-base for cultural psychology. This knowledge should be useful to you in any future endeavor that involves interacting with people from different backgrounds. At the end of the term, you will likely find yourself looking at your own ways of thinking, interacting, and organizing your time with an increased awareness of how your mindset and your way of life reflects particular cultural models as well as a certain few cross-cultural universals. You will likely increase your appreciation for what is variable and malleable in persons around this planet, both within and across cultures, but also your appreciation for what humans have in common. Hopefully this experience will increase not only your resources for useful critical thinking about human behavior, but also increase your interest, respect, and compassion for people from all backgrounds. This course takes a *global, international* perspective on culture and psychology, though with some applications to cultural differences within the USA.

Cultural (or 'cross-cultural') psychology is a "crossroads" field with links to many other disciplines, which are explored here abundantly. The course format is primarily a series of talks (i.e., lecture), with some discussion and/or in-class exercises at *every* session but particularly at certain sessions when we devote about half of the class session to such. *This course has extensive readings; you're expected to read everything assigned.*

Assignments and Grading

Your **final course grade** is based on the following (percentage of final grade, then maximum points shown):

- 10% ...credit for five "responses to readings" (50 points, 10 for each credited response)
- 7% ...discussion-group class-citizenship credit (35 points, 12 for each of first two, plus 11 points for the third, that you participate in)
- 2% ...class attendance credit (10 points)
- 6% ...grade on outline/abstract of your research paper [submitted in hard-copy] (30 points)
- 20% ...grade on final version of research paper (100 points)
- 20% ...score on the midterm quiz (100 points)
- 35% ...score on final exam (170 points)

The point system is designed to make the credit totals show well online on Canvas. Maximum total for course: 500 points. What follows is more detail on each of these components (a guide to doing well in the course).

The **exams** – both midterm quiz and final – consist of a multiple-choice section (68% of the point total for the exam) concentrating on key concepts (definitions and examples of them), followed by a set of mini-essay questions (32% of the point total for the exam). The mini-essay questions are drawn from among the "big questions" listed at the end of this syllabus. They are these exact questions, though they may be revised during the term to increase clarity. The mini-essay questions on the **midterm exam** will be drawn from among the *first five* of the big questions. Those on the **final exam** will be drawn from big questions 6-11. Mini-essay responses

typically fill one page or less (unless one has very large handwriting). No dictionaries, thesauruses, calculators, or electronic devices can be used during the exams, except that a translating dictionary can be allowed for those with English fluency issues, if instructor approves it. Multiple-choice items especially emphasize material covered both in the assigned readings and in class.

Reading responses are responses to assigned readings. They should be sent electronically to the course TA. They are due at 8:15 am on class days, thus the reading response is due, essentially, at the beginning of the class meeting (that meeting associated with a given reading); advice would be to finish it by the night before, of course! The purpose of reading responses is manifold: to stimulate students to actively engage with readings, to be earlier and better prepared for class (and exams), and also to provide important raw material for educative group discussions. The length for a reading response is exactly one (full, can be single- or double-spaced) page of text for each. Each reading response must be based on the assigned readings corresponding to a due date for the reading response. For each reading response, you must refer to the content in the assigned reading for that due date (citing specifically one or more pages in the reading). Here is a guiding framework:

After a sentence or two or three describing some relevant point(s) in what you have read (thus demonstrating accurate knowledge of some content in the reading), use one of these three 'magic phrases':

- i. *'But here is an important question.'* Then describe an important question or controversy (related to the relevant point[s]) that has not been (and perhaps will not be easily) answered or settled, OR
- ii. *'But here I found something I must question.'* Describe something -- an idea or finding or inference or assumption or over-simplification or way of labeling or summarizing things -- that you found in the reading (related to the relevant point[s]) that you think is questionable -- and what makes it questionable, OR
- iii. *'And here is the most important point in the entire reading for today.'* Describe something (an idea or finding, related to the relevant point[s]) you think is very important and explain why you think it is more important (has priority over) than one or more other things emphasized elsewhere in the reading. Identify clearly what these other things are, it is *not* enough to just say something is important, say also *what* is *less* important.

To get full credit, your response must be something that (in the judgment of course TA or instructor) could conceivably be discussed in this class. It should include one of the 'magic phrases' (or something close). To get full credit for this part of the course, you must complete five reading responses satisfactorily during the term, *and they must be distributed across five time-divisions of the class* (one for each section indicated at the end of the syllabus by code [a] through [e]). You have considerable freedom in deciding which class sessions or readings to submit reading responses for. But the (a) through (e) distribution does require that you spread them across the term instead of (kind of a bad habit!) waiting till the end of the term to do them all. Reading responses are not accepted late, or for wrong readings for a date. Good idea to try first (a) response in the first two weeks of term.

In general, in-class ***discussion groups*** will occur in the latter part of a class session, and in general you will be assigned to a specific discussion group (based on various algorithms) at the beginning of the group-discussion period, although in some cases these might be simply with people sitting near you. The general format: Groups discuss, then the whole class discusses. To get credit, you must sign onto a page (handed out) that fills in the consensus or major points of view in your group with regard to that session's topics.

There is a bit of ***credit for attendance*** (2% of grade; 10 points). You get all this credit automatically, unless instructor experiences repeated (on many occasions) difficulty finding you in class sessions. Should you happen to be documented as participating in all 5 (rather than just the required 3) group-discussions, you automatically get all this credit, but missing 1 or 2 of them doesn't necessarily mean you can't get all the attendance credit.

The **research paper** is designed to better traditional term papers in terms of advancing student learning, in a couple of ways. *First*, students learn more from the writing experience when they have the opportunity to make use of feedback. *Second*, this research paper involves a structure designed to promote reflection, thoughtfulness, and critical thinking involving the contrast of easily-gotten answers with higher-quality answers in a search for truth. The structure involves identifying easy, common, or merely intuitive answers to important questions, contrasting these answers with better ones identifiable from scientific sources (including one article that is assigned and provided to you), and arriving at a conclusion, perhaps nuanced, that recognizes the complexity of issues of psychology and/or culture. Here next is the recommended structure for the final version:

1. This short section (2-3 paragraphs) is a kind of introductory preamble. In a sentence or two, identify why the question is important. Then, to set up an interesting background for further investigating your topic, do one or more of the following four things (whichever seems to you most applicable):
 - Give an intuitive (typical, commonsense, or even paranormal) response and identify its possible inadequacies
 - Give your own initial subjective response (reflecting your own previous relatively uninformed attitude or opinion) response and also identify its possible inadequacies
 - Give an answer that a superficial smartphone or google user might come up with rapidly, and also identify the possible inadequacies of that response
 - Give a response that a (very much) non-Western person might presumably give, that most would discount as not applying here in a Western context (that is, an answer that might be plausible for someone else, but not applicable here, “a culturally different response”)
2. (In as many paragraphs as you need) Now look at the assigned article for your topic question, identify how it answers the question and consider how it *also* might be wrong as well as right
3. (In as many paragraphs as you need) Identify another article that comes closest to correcting something(s) wrong on the first one, or otherwise adds something different; identify how it helps answer the question and consider how it *also* might be wrong as well as right
4. (In a paragraph or two) Draw a conclusion, including (a) an indication of the degree to which a yes or a no answer is better than the alternative, and (b) an identification of what more one would need to know in order to arrive at a more definitive answer to the topic question.

Note: In the paper, please number your four sections (1), (2), (3), (4), but do not reproduce the rest of the instructions above.

The topic for the paper is chosen by you, within the constraints that you must choose a topic from a limited “menu”; there will be 6-10 different topics done by members of the whole class. *Research-paper topics will be focused on some issue on which there are likely to be different points of view.* For each topic, one article will be assigned, and one additional article is chosen by you. Multiple students will be working on the same topic, but there is no joint or group product and no group grade for the research paper. Because papers on one topic are evaluated simultaneously, be sure that, if you are influenced by the thoughts of other students, you acknowledge that contribution accurately and openly (so as to avoid “plagiarism” – see note below). Originality is one of the grading criteria (see below).

A good first step is to come up with some initial reasonable responses for the short section 1 above (you can revise these initial responses later, of course). A good second step would be to then read the assigned article. You might develop a very carefully thought-out response to it – what you agree with and don’t, what you think is well-supported by evidence and what isn’t, what seems logical or illogical, what might be left out – in other words, a first provisional response to the longer section 2 above. At this point you are in a good position to prepare a research-paper outline or abstract. The next step would be to find another source (article), and do the same for it; you could do this step before preparing the outline or abstract, but it may be easier to do this afterwards.

What are the requirements for the research-paper outline/abstract? It must all fit on one side of one sheet of paper, and be turned in as hard-copy. For the outline/abstract only it is OK to use single-spacing if you wish. It should give us (instructor and TA) an idea of the direction you are planning for your paper; the more specific and/or thoughtful the outline/abstract is, the more likely we are going to be able to give you a high quantity of useful feedback. Extremely vague and overly general outlines/abstracts don’t get full credit.

As for the final research-paper, bear in mind what Gracián wrote in 1647: “good things, when short, are twice as good.” The aim is to create a paper that packs a lot of valuable thinking into a relatively brief space. It should be a minimum of five full double-spaced pages in length (not counting reference list), and at a maximum it should not exceed seven full double-spaced pages in length, not counting reference list. It must be double-spaced throughout, and with a size 12 font. You should include (cite, discuss) also the best additional journal article you could find; you are free to change what you identify as the best additional article after you turn in the outline (in case you identify one there). This must be a journal article, not a book, book chapter, or internet site or page. (Why? Because you should identify a scientifically peer-reviewed source. Otherwise, what you come up may better qualify for section 1 above, rather than section 3!) You are free to cite and reference more than one additional journal article if you wish to. Note that this paper is not an assignment to report or to “critique the

article” in all possible ways – instead you are to use these articles in the course of trying to answer in the best possible way the basic question posed by the research-paper topic. Keep focus on that question, that topic.

The final research-paper is graded on the following main criteria:

- A. Is typed, readable, free of gross spelling and typographic errors
- B. Is well-organized and focused (not rambling, or with irrelevant sections)
- C. Has all four sections identified above (your numbering these helps us identify how it does this)
- D. Does a good job of identifying divergent potential points of view regarding the question
- E. Applies critical thinking to the research approaches described. For example: examines how good is the supporting evidence (or the rationale), how good (relevant, reliable, large effect size, large sample, etc.) is this evidence (or rationale) is, whether some other reasonable interpretation of findings is plausible but has not been ruled out, and other issues.
- F. Originality – indications are that (at least) the thinking is your own and (at best) it goes beyond and even challenges the “conventional wisdom” or “commonsense view” on aspects of the topic
- G. Includes use of the assigned article(s) and one additional journal article
- H. The citations and reference list in APA style; search <https://library.uoregon.edu> for ‘APA citing style’ to access help on APA styles. –*Note:* On paper, no binders or covers, please, and no title page is necessary.

For the research paper (or the outline/abstract for the research paper) turned in **late** lose 10% of their points for each weekday they are not turned in (starting with the due date). With *some* course requirements, alternative arrangements for due dates may be possible but *only when* an authoritative excuse is presented in advance of an absence. Credit for discussion-groups (two can be missed without penalty), gives some flexibility if your life takes unexpected turns.

Your ***final grade*** in the course is based on the total of your points(papers, exams, participation, etc.) **A** range is exactly 90.00% or better, **B** range is 80% to 90%, **C** range 70% to 80%, **D** range 60% to 70%, **F**s are less than 60%. ‘+’ and ‘-’ are added to grades if they fall exactly in the top 1/3 or bottom 1/3, respectively, of A, B, C, and D range. In terms of points, A is 450-500, B is 400-450, C is 350-400, D is 300-350, and F is under 300. For department grading standards see: <https://psychology.uoregon.edu/courses/department-grading-standards/>

Special Requirements for Graduate Students (Psychology 559)

There will be special requirements for graduate students taking the course as Psychology 559. 571 students will meet at a few additional times outside the class time, either in-person or electronically. 559 students are expected to attend an in-person graduate student meeting with the instructor early in the quarter (typically by about the third or fourth week of the term).

Academic Integrity

This instructor takes academic integrity seriously. Insuring the “validity” of grades requires seeing that they reflect honest work and learning rather than cheating. **Cheating** is defined as providing or accepting information on an exam, plagiarism or copying anyone's written work. Students caught cheating will be given an “**F**” for the course, and UO’s student conduct coordinator will be informed. The instructor retains the right to assign seats for tests, to change individual's seating for test security purposes, to require and check ID for admission to tests. “**Plagiarism**” is basically a form of theft: putting your name on work that is (in any part) not yours, where you have not fully identified the source from which you borrowed. Even taking someone else's ideas or paraphrasing their expression, without acknowledgment, is plagiarism. Be aware that the instructor is knowledgeable about computer-age plagiarizing techniques and how to diagnose their use. “Your responsibility, when you put your name on a piece of work, is simply to distinguish between what is yours and what is not, and to credit those who in any way have contributed” (quoting Nancy Cotton of Wake Forest U.).

List of Psych. 459/559 additional readings (in APA style), these will be made available via canvas.

Saucier, G. (2017). Personality, character, and cultural differences: Distinguishing enduring-order and evolving-order cultures. In A. T. Church (Ed.), *Personality across cultures*, Vol. 3. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger.

Schwartz, S. H. (2012). An overview of the Schwartz theory of basic values. *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*, 2 (1). <http://dx.doi.org/10.9707/2307-0919.1116>

Wallace, A. F. C. (1956). Revitalization movements. *American Anthropologist*, 58, 264-281.

PSYCHOLOGY 459 (559) SCHEDULE: What's Happening When

- Jan. 8 Syllabus; overview of the course
✓ Reading Assignment (i.e., for session listed on next line below): Heine chs. 1-2
- Jan. 10 (a) Universality and cultural specificity; culture and human nature
✓ Reading Assignment: Heine ch. 3
- Jan. 17 (a) Cultural learning and cultural evolution
✓ Reading Assignment: none
- Jan. 22 Cultural innovation and tradition
✓ Reading Assignment: Heine ch. 4
- Jan. 24 (a) Considerations and methods for good cultural-psychology research; *discussion groups*
✓ Reading Assignment: Heine ch. 5
- Jan. 29 (a) Development and socialization in cultural perspective
✓ Reading Assignment: Heine ch. 6
- Jan. 31 (b) The self in cultural perspective; *discussion groups*
✓ Reading Assignment: Saucier (2017) pages 265-278 only
- Feb. 5 (b) Personality in cultural perspective; distributive model of culture
✓ Reading Assignment: Heine ch. 7; Wallace (1956)
- Feb. 7 (b) Acculturation, multiculturalism; crisis and revitalization
✓ Reading Assignment: Heine ch. 8
- Feb. 12 (b) Motivation in cultural perspective
✓ Reading Assignment: Schwartz (2012)
- Feb. 14 (c) Values in cultural perspective; *discussion groups*
- Feb. 19 **MIDTERM QUIZ**
✓ Reading Assignment: Heine ch. 9, pp. 345-374
- Feb. 21 (c) Cultural effects on (and cultural styles in) cognition and perception; *discussion groups*
OUTLINE/ABSTRACT OF RESEARCH PAPER is due Feb. 26!
✓ Reading Assignment: Heine ch. 9, pp. 374-399
- Feb. 26 (c) Language and culture; linguistic relativity
✓ Reading Assignment: Heine ch. 10
- Feb. 28 (d) Emotions
✓ Reading Assignment: Heine ch. 11
- March 5 (d) Relationships and interpersonal attraction
✓ Reading Assignment: Heine ch. 12
- March 7 (d) Ethics, morality, religion, and justice: Universals and cultural specificity; *discussion groups*
✓ Reading Assignment: Heine ch. 13-14
- March 12 (e) Culture and physical health; universals and cultural specifics in psychological disorders
FINAL VERSION OF RESEARCH PAPER is due March 14, at beginning of class (submit on Canvas)!
✓ Reading Assignment: Saucier (2017) pages 278-291
- March 14 (e) Universals and cultural specifics in treatments for disorders; what is most central form of psychological cross-cultural differences? Wrap-up

March 21 (Wednesday), 10:15 am, FINAL EXAM

Letters in parentheses: you are expected to turn in one reading response for any one of the (a) sessions, any one of the (b) sessions, and so on for (c) and (d) and (e) sessions. See syllabus above for details.

Big questions: The pool of potential mini-essay items for midterm and final exams

1. What is the best way of defining 'culture' – what can be called 'cultural' and what cannot? Why should it – or why should it not -- mean the same thing as 'nation' or 'society' or 'a particular group of individuals'?
2. What is the best way to discover and/or measure the cultural aspects of human behavior?
3. How do societies change and maintain their cultural system? And as part of maintaining it by having it passed on, how do children learn a cultural system?
4. With regard to the self and personality: Where (e.g., what variables) does one find important cross-cultural variability, and where does one find well-established universals (i.e., very little variability)? (In other words: How does the nature of the self and of personality differ between cultures, and what is true of the self and personality in all cultures?)
5. With regard to the values and motivation: Where (e.g., what variables) does one find important cross-cultural variability, and where does one find well-established universals (i.e., very little variability)? (In other words: How does the nature of values and motivation differ between cultures, and what is true of motivation and values in all cultures?)
6. With regard to cognition and perception – what are the most important cross-cultural differences, and which phenomena are relatively universal?
7. What are important cultural differences in how individuals carry on relationships with each other, and in how they relate to the cultural systems they have experienced in their family and in their wider society?
8. With respect to emotions and mental health – what are the most important cross-cultural differences, and which phenomena are relatively universal?
9. With respect to psychological aspects of morality and justice – where does one observe the most cross-cultural variability (and in what way) and where does one find the least (and what is it that is so much in common)?
10. What are key examples of ways in which human culture has an effect on human biology (genetics, physiology, neural patterns)?
11. (An integrative question:) What does the body of knowledge gained so far in cultural psychology tell us about human nature, that is, about what humans are basically like from a psychological perspective? Which of these aspects are and are not shared with other species (i.e., animals)?

Numbers 1-5 are candidates to be on the midterm, and the remaining questions 6-11 are candidates to be on the final exam. However, note that number 11 in particular may draw on material from before as well as after the midterm.

Brief essays should include two or three numbered basic points, each expressed in exactly one sentence. After that, separately, provide any explanations, justifications, or key lines of evidence for your basic points, along with any definitions or assumptions that are important to how one should understand your basic points.